

The Fall 646

Chapter 646: Clan Volor

"We're climbing the mountain. It's time to deal with the Dominators for real," Zac said, and two sets of ruthless eyes turned to the massive planet in the sky.

"Finally. This wound of mine has been itching for a while now," Ogras muttered.

Part of Zac just wanted to rush up, guns blazing, but he knew some things had to be dealt with first. So he walked over toward the group of Gemlings who hesitantly stood a few hundred meters away from Port Atwood's armies.

Their attention was mostly placed on the large army of Zhix who were already consecrating and burning the corpses of the traitor Zhix, but they slowly turned toward Zac as he approached. Hekruv Vira and a few of the True Sky-elders were already there talking with them in low volume, likely introducing him to them.

"Thank you for your assistance, human," the Gemling said. "Without your aid, our clan would likely be lost to the rivers of time."

"You're welcome," Zac nodded. "They were a common enemy to Earth. Those Zhix were traitors that needed to be hunted down, and the cultists were foreign invaders. I'm sorry we couldn't get here earlier."

"I am Helo. I guess I am the leader of Clan Volor now that the last of the Masons have fallen," Helo said with a sigh. "Vira says you are the leader of the outside world?"

There was an undeniable tinge of confusion and skepticism as he looked Zac up and down, and Zac understood what was going on. This Helo had witnessed the terror of Void's Disciple first-hand, while Zac hadn't really displayed any especially great feats while trying out his Void Energy during the last battle. He even got himself wounded a few times while figuring things out.

Perhaps even the Anointed with their hulking frames seemed more impressive than he was in the eyes of the Gemlings.

Zac thought a moment, and an earthshattering aura suddenly burst out from his body. He let loose all his killing intent, along with a Dao Field powered by his high mastery Fragment of the Axe. Zac even went so far as to push the Dao Field forward with the help of [Spiritual Void].

His killing intent and his Dao that focused on battle and conflict almost merged, and the area once more gave off the bloody aura of a pitched war. The pressure was earthshattering, and even Hekruv Vira with his Late E-Grade cultivation took a step back as he looked at Zac with wide eyes.

The monkeyman had called Zac a supreme Progenitor, but it looked like he had only been thinking in terms of potential rather than current power. It was good to give the True Sky Faction a small reminder as well before he set off. Of course, Zac wasn't planning on forcing the Gemlings to bend the knee, and the aura disappeared after just a few seconds.

"What's with this planet outside," Helo muttered as he released a shaky breath. "Didn't you get Integrated just a year ago? Why are there so many monsters?"

“Well, we were a bit unlucky to get an unusually tough challenge when the System sent over multiple top-tier Invaders, but those who survived probably grew a bit stronger than normal?” Zac smiled.

“Well, your power is a good thing,” Helo said. “I have spoken with those of the True Sky Faction, and Clan Volor wishes to follow in their steps. We are willing to join the Atwood Empire if you will have us.”

Zac was surprised and relieved of how easily the Gemlings, or rather Clan Volor, joined his faction, but it saved him a lot of effort. It was also a bit odd to hear the term ‘Atwood Empire’, but he guessed it was the most apt description. His faction couldn’t be considered a town any longer, and it was neither a sect nor a clan. A budding single-planet Empire was probably correct, though it was definitely a bit weird to be called an Emperor, especially considering Earth’s cultural norms.

“Port Atwood would be happy to have you. We have both great craftsman heritages and almost endless materials, but we are lacking talents who can make use of them,” Zac said enthusiastically, and the eyes of the Gemlings lit up with excitement.

However, Helo and a few of the elites with a large number of crystals across their bodies looked a bit troubled.

“You should understand, embedding our gems into weapons hurts our souls and we cannot do so freely,” Helo said.

“I will not force anyone to use their gems,” Zac said. “Port Atwood runs on contribution. If you decide to use your gems to create supreme equipment you will be rewarded with massive amounts of Contribution Points, which can be traded for anything from perusing the heritage to getting unique and valuable materials.”

Zac had never planned on setting some sort of quota on these gemlings for producing crystals since he knew that they would likely use them even if he didn’t ask. These craftsmen all had hybrid classes or pure craftsman classes, and their method to evolve was essentially to create precious Spirit Tools.

They could both gain a breakthrough and a massive number of resources by temporarily damaging their souls. Zac would personally make that trade in a heartbeat, and he was confident that a lot of these Gemlings would as well. Helo nodded in relief when he heard there would be no forced harvesting, and things got a lot more harmonious from there on out.

The two talked a bit longer, and Zac learned about the experiences of the Gemlings. It turned out that Void’s Disciple had appeared even earlier than Zac expected, first making contact with the Gemlings even before the Hunt. From then he had spent most of his time in here, only occasionally venturing outside to Earth.

Adcarkas had disappeared almost half a day before the upheavals though, taking Inevitability with him. Speaking off, Zac felt a pang of worry upon hearing that Inevitability had spent almost all of her time after the Hunt cultivating inside Clan Volor’s bloodline vats. Who knew what kind of powerups she had since last time? Still, the real threat to Zac was Void’s Disciple as far as he was concerned.

As for the Gemlings, they had arduously managed to convince their Zhix captors to head to the mountain, somewhat going against their orders to ‘stay put’. They had reached the mountain around 5

hours ago and soon became aware of the approaching cultist army. Not wanting to deal with them, the allied group set course south-east, snatching up Spatial Seals along the way.

However, they quickly backpedaled when they realized that their old dreaded enemy the Lunar Clan was spread out across the slopes on the eastern side, wantonly looting the caves there. Caught between a rock and a hard place they soon decided to deal with the cultists rather than the much larger group of werewolves, which brought them to the present situation.

Zac sighed when learning that the werewolves had made it as well. He had almost hoped that they would somehow run into some problem that got them stuck on the islands, but it turned out he had no such luck. Even worse, the Helo had no idea of exactly how many of them there were since they had spread out just like his own army did. But he said that their scouts had easily spotted hundreds before fleeing.

Zac asked for some more details before he decided to take his leave. He had gotten the next quest already, and he was afraid that wasting any time would end badly.

"Alright, we'll have more chances to get to know each other in the future, but I need to prepare a few things right now. The worst of the bunch are still alive, I need to deal with them," Zac said.

"Wait," Helo said after some hesitation. "Take this thing."

He took out a crystal from his Cosmos Sack the next moment, and Zac looked at it curiously. It was clearly the same type of crystal that covered the bodies of the Gemlings, but it was pitch-black. It was also covered in extremely intricate inscriptions, which showcased skill that far eclipsed his sister's.

But Zac frowned when he looked at the thing since it gave him an extremely bad feeling. It was a curse, an extremely sinister one according to [Primal Polyglot]. It gave off an even nastier aura than those fractals in Leviala's eyes, like it contained the accumulated hatred of the whole Gemling-clan.

"Those two you hunt killed most of our Masons and harvested their gems. Their goal was to create a taboo item using hundreds of thousands of souls of their own kind," Pula said. "We were forced to help with its construction."

"Taboo item?" Zac said with a frown. "What kind?"

Zac had gained a lot since his last battle with Void's Disciple, and if Adcarkas maintained the same power as back then, Zac felt confident in taking him out. But if Adcarkas had managed to create some extremely dangerous taboo weapon, things once more became murky.

"We don't know, but it has something to do with the Dao of Space, Dao of Karma, and Soul Manipulation," Pula said with a shake of his head. "Those two Daos are not something we are well versed in, so we could only follow the provided blueprint without much understanding."

Zac slowly nodded, but he couldn't draw any direct conclusions from those three clues alone. Adcarkas was a Spatial Cultivator, and he no doubt had some sort of Karmic Heritage from his master. It could either be a final piece in the Great Redeemer's puzzle, or some sort of powerful weapon.

"What's this thing then?" Zac asked.

"A fault-line," Pula said, his mouth widening hate-filled grimace. "The treasure we made him was perfect on the surface, but he had the audacity to use the souls of our masons in its construction. We do not know much about the Daos incorporated, but we have our means when it comes to souls, so I hid some traps in the depths of its construction. Crush this near the ones you call the Dominators, and the traps will be sprung. I was hoping to use it myself, but I don't think I can get up there."

Zac looked at the Gemling leader with surprise. It sounded like an extremely risky endeavor to embed something like that in the Taboo Treasure, knowing Inevitability and Void's Disciple. If they even got a hint of someone messing with their plan, they'd unleash a massive wave of death and carnage on the Gemlings.

"What will happen?" Zac asked as he gingerly took the ominous crystal.

"It's hard to say since we don't know what kind of treasure it is," Pula said. "But it will definitely be destabilized at the least, and probably break it altogether."

"Thank you," Zac nodded as he turned to Rhubat. "Have you selected your people?"

"We are ready whenever you are, Warmaster. The final crusade beckons," Rhubat rumbled as a group of massive Anointed stood behind him.

A few of them actually looked even bigger than before, and Rhubat himself was even approaching six meters. It was like they had been stuck at the peak of the F-Grade because of that elixir of theirs, but all that excess energy from kills kept making their bodies grow.

"Alright," Zac nodded. "Let's rest up an hour before we set out. The people we encounter from now on will be the strongest warriors left in this world."

Rhubat nodded and the anointed walked away to rest up as well. Zac wasn't in a big need of rest because of his wounds, but rather from the need to recharge his Void Energy. But he first walked over to Joanna who was making rounds in the army.

"I'll leave the army in your, Havath's, and Verana's hands while I go up there," Zac said with a low voice. "Try to get everyone a Seal, but don't go too far toward the eastern side if you can help it."

"The Zhix seem to be almost completely Sealed up after the battle, so we only need something like 120 Seals for our own. The True Sky Faction only needs around twenty, I think. All our elites already had Seals, so the refugees had almost free reign on the middle layers after they joined," Joanna nodded.

"Another thing. The Gemlings have joined Port Atwood, but I think it was mostly out of necessity," Zac said.

"And you need a hype-man?" Joanna smiled. "Don't worry, I have the flags and speeches all ready."

"Just make them feel happy about joining," Zac snorted. "Try to get to know them and figure out a way to settle them back on Earth. Perhaps they want to live in the underworld? We have a lot of valuable land there that's just sitting empty."

"I'll have an integration plan ready by the time we leave this place," Joanna said.

Zac nodded before he walked over to Thea who stood in the distance. They hadn't actually met since the upheavals since Thea stayed on the lower layers while he trained on the upper ones. He had just called her through the communication crystal to say that he was fine before.

He knew he could have gone down to talk with her, but the situation was a bit weird. Neither of them was good with words, and Memorysteel Mountain wasn't really the place to figure out their feelings. So Zac had somewhat avoided her until they could have a proper talk, which would be outside the mystic realm.

But he also knew he couldn't just leave for the sphere in the sky without saying something.

"You look different," Thea said with interest as he walked over. "Very dashing."

"What?" Zac blurted as he looked down at his blood-splattered body, before he looked up at Thea with a raised brow.

"Not that, stupid. Your face. Did you evolve your race before?" she asked.

"Oh, that. I changed?" Zac muttered as he took out a mirror.

It was true. His face was better, though barely. Features had once more undergone some subtle changes, but they were less pronounced compared to the time he reached E-Grade body. It looked like the upgrades were mostly internal this time, though he did gain a small touch-up.

"Who knows, I might be a real looker by the time I become an Apostate," Zac said with a wry smile.

"What are your plans?"

"I'm a bit better, but staying down here," Thea sighed. "We need some people to look after our soldiers in case the werewolves show up. Besides, there are a lot of caves on the upper layers to loot, so it's not really a loss to stay down here. I've kept track of the layers our elites searched all this time, and where there should be unsearched caves left behind. I think I can make a killing up there even if I rest up a day."

Zac nodded, somewhat relieved. He had been prepared to argue for her to stay at the mountain because of her injuries, but it looked like she knew her own situation best. Unfortunately, not everyone was as reasonable.

"I'm going up there," Kenzie resolutely said as she walked over. "With or without you."